

COVID-19 Operating Plan for the Erath County Judiciary

Recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, visitors, court staff, judges, and other individuals entering the buildings housing the courts, the courts of **Erath County** will implement the following protective measures:

General

1. All judges will comply with the Emergency Orders issued by the Supreme Court of Texas and Court of Criminal Appeals, including conducting in-person proceedings according to the guidance issued by the Office of Court Administration regarding physical distancing, maximum group size, and other restrictions and precautions.
2. All judges will use reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely.
3. The local administrative district judge will maintain regular communication with the local health authority and county judge and adjust this operating plan as necessary with conditions in the county.
4. Judges will begin setting non-essential in-person proceedings no sooner than June 1, 2020

Judge and Court Staff Health

1. Judges and court staff who can perform the essential functions of their job remotely may telework when possible.
2. Judge and court staff monitoring requirements shall be determined by the local administrative judge, as set out below.
3. Judges or court staff who feel feverish or have measured temperatures equal to or greater than 99.6°F, or with new or worsening signs or symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, or having known close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19 may not be permitted to enter the building and should seek medical advice.
4. Judges and court staff may be required to wear face coverings, practice physical distancing, and practice appropriate hygiene recommendations as directed.

Scheduling

1. The courts shall publish schedules which are established to reduce occupancy in court buildings.

Vulnerable Populations

1. Individuals who are over age 65 and individuals with serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer or other conditions requiring such therapy are considered to be vulnerable populations.

2. Each judge will include information on orders setting hearings, dockets notices, and in other communications notifying individuals who are in vulnerable populations of the ability to contact the court to identify themselves as a vulnerable individual and receive accommodations. A notice with this information will be posted on the courts' websites and in conspicuous locations around the court building.
3. Vulnerable populations who are scheduled for court will be accommodated on a case by case basis.

Physical Distancing

1. All persons not from the same household who are permitted in the court building will be required to maintain adequate physical distancing of at least 6 feet.
2. The maximum capacity of the courtroom will be monitored and enforced by court staff.
3. In each courtroom, the counsel tables, witness stand, judge's bench, and clerk, court reporter, and bailiff seating have been arranged in such a way so that there is physical distancing of at least 6 feet between each space.

Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed at multiple places throughout court buildings.
2. The Department of State Health Service's "Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer" has been posted in multiple locations on each floor of the court building.

Screening

1. When individuals attempt to enter the court building, court security officers may ask the individuals if they are feeling feverish; have a cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing; or have been in close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19. Individuals who indicate yes to any of these questions may be refused admittance to the court building.
2. Inmates being transported from the jail to the court building will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 and may have their temperature taken prior to transport. Inmates with symptoms or a temperature equal to or above 99.6°F may not be transported to the court building.

Face Coverings

1. All individuals entering the court building may be required to wear face coverings at all times.
2. Individuals will be encouraged to bring cloth face coverings with them, but if the individual does not have a cloth face covering, a disposable face mask may be provided if the supply is available.

Cleaning

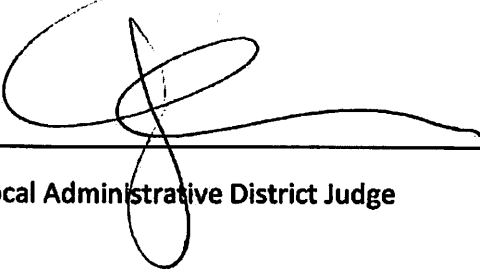
1. Court building cleaning staff will clean the common areas of the court building so that common spaces are cleaned at least every 4 hours.
2. Court building cleaning staff will clean the courtrooms between morning and afternoon proceedings, and at the end of each day the courtroom is used.

3. Court building cleaning staff shall be provided cleaning supplies shown to be effective with this coronavirus.
4. Court building cleaning staff shall be trained on proper cleaning techniques and provided appropriate personal protective equipment.

I have attempted to confer with all judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building regarding this Operating Plan. In developing the plan, I consulted with the local health authority and county judge, documentation of which is attached to this plan. I will ensure that the judges of courts with courtrooms in the court building covered by this Operating Plan conduct proceedings consistent with the plan.

Date: _____


5/11/20



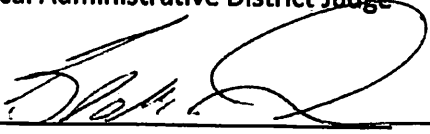
Local Administrative District Judge

Acknowledgment

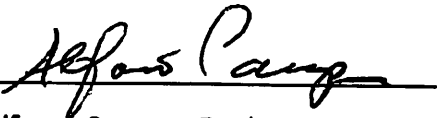
I have been provided a copy of the Covid-19 Operating Plan for the Erath County Judiciary. I have reviewed and approve the plan and agree to conduct court proceedings accordingly.



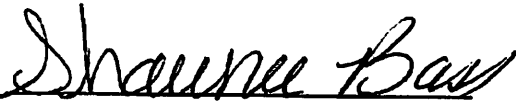
Jason Cashon,
Local Administrative District Judge



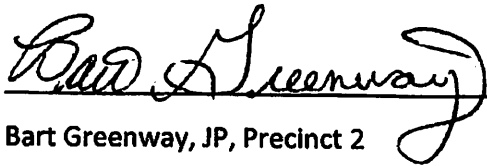
Blake Thompson, Erath County
Court at Law Judge




Alfonso Campos, Erath County Judge



Shawnee Bass, JP, Precinct 1, 3, 4



Bart Greenway, JP, Precinct 2



Dr. Jeffrey Moore, M.D.,
Local Health Authority

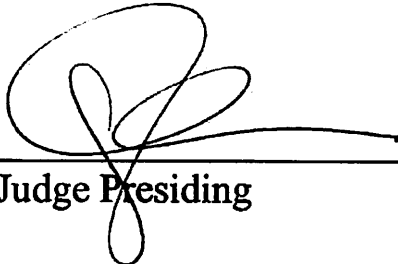
**STANDING ORDER REGARDING COURTROOM
CAPACITY AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING
WITHIN COMMON AREAS OUTSIDE THE
COURTROOM**

IN CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH MATTERS RELATED TO COVID-19, THE COURT WILL ALLOW NO MORE THAN TEN (10) PEOPLE IN THE COURTROOM AT ANY TIME.

FURTHERMORE, ANYONE MAY BE REQUIRED TO WAIT OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM IN COMMON AREAS – AT LEAST SIX (6) FEET APART FROM OTHERS - OR OUTSIDE THE BUILDING UNTIL YOUR CASE IS CALLED.

This Standing Order remains in effect until further notice and is issued pursuant to, and in compliance with, Emergency Orders issued by the Texas Supreme Court and the Court of Criminal Appeals.

Effective May 11, 2020.



Judge Presiding